WARTA PASCA

postgraduate newsletter

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
UNIMAS

SPECIAL EDITION

GRADUATION DAY: 15-16 AUGUST 2009

RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AT THE FACULTY OF RESOURCE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- UNIMAS SLUSE PROGRAM: IS IT AN AVENUE FOR INVESTMENT?
- A POSTGRADUATE DEGREE FOR EVERYONE
- UNDERGRADUATES TO BECOME POSTGRADUATES
- LIFE IS DESIGN, DESIGN IS CREATIVITY, CREATIVITY IS HARMONY
- TESTIMONIALS
- TRIBUTE TO NORRIHAH

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WELCOME TO THE 2ND ISSUE OF WARTAPASCA

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Assalamualaikum and Salam Perpaduan, to colleagues and postgraduate students

This issue of WartaPasca will focus more on one of the most exciting and important event of the year, Graduation or Convocation Day. The urgency of theses examinations, corrections and vivas - all lead to the intensity of the event itself. Apart from these, all other activities and planning which leads to this day displayed the importance and feelings of the Graduation Day.

Apart from this, this issue also brings about two rather sad cases, one of which was, and still is, rather close to my heart - the demise of Dr Norrihah Takuan after a long and insistent fight with breast cancer. She was a kind and helpful neighbor, and at that time both her children and mine were studying at the same class in this school in Taman Sukma, Kuching. Whenever I was too busy, she or her husband, Dr Khairudin would willingly fetch my son from school to their house for a quick meal before I came for him.

The other touching story is written by Mr. Koh Say Ung, a postgraduate student studying for his CMBA degree. Although this may be just another story of courage under such dire circumstances, but read it thoroughly and you will find that it brings about a sharp message never to take your health for granted, or any tiny and minor symptoms unnoticed. My experience kept on reminding me that our health is something for us to enjoy and savor, but at the same time it too demands proper attention and continuous maintenance.

On a more academic side, the first cycle of the interview for scholarships was successfully carried out by CGS on 3rd March 2009, and at 52 students, this cycle had the largest number of applicants. As scholarships are limited in number and the award itself mirrored the student's ability to comprehend their project in the eye of the panel members, there will always be cases where students failed to obtain theirs. This by no means reflect the inferior nature of the project, only that CGS have to concede to a certain number of successful applicants in each interview, based on the remaining amount of funds available.

Thank You.

Prof Dr Kopli Bujang
Dean, Centre for Graduate Studies

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THE PEOPLE BEHIND CGS

Kopli, Hafiz, Ernest, Mahadir, Misut, Masrinah, Herywaty, Sai, Nur Hasnita, Diana, Haliah, Adeline, Winnie, Nor Fadzilah

UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

Deputy Vice Chancellor
(Academic and International)

Prof. Dr. Kopli Bujang
Dean

Winnie Vincent
Personal Assistant

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ernest C. De Run
Deputy Dean

Nor Fadzilah Kamarudzaman
Assistant Registrar

Adeline Ann Lubi
Assistant Admin. Officer

Diana Tracy Denim
Assist. Information Technology Officer

Misut Pa'ei
Assistant Administrator
- Research Degrees
- Student Intake & Registration
- Student Monitoring and Output
- Finalising List of Graduating Students

Nur Hasnita Abdullah
Assistant Administrator
- Thesis Examination
- *Viva Voce*
- Conferment of Degree
- Arrangements for Convocation

Sai Merikan
Assistant Administrator
- Coursework Degrees
- Student Intake & Registration
- Student Monitoring and Output
- Finalising List of Graduating Students

Masrinah Jumat
Assistant Administrator
- Student Applications
- Management of Office Supplies
- Attendance & Annual Leave

Herywaty Ten
Assistant Administrator
- Applications for Student Pass
- Immigration & Student Visas
- Admin & Student Filling

Haliah Hj Taip
Assistant Accountant
- Scholarship Application
- Interviews for Scholarships
- Disbursement of Scholarships
- Budgeting and Expenditure

Mahadir Sidi
Computer Technician
- CGS Webmaster
- Monitoring of IT Facilities
- Maintenance of IT & Peripherals
- General Technical Support

Abdul Hafiz Hipni
General Assistant
- Receipt and Delivery of Mails
- Photocopy and Binding
- Maintenance of Office Facilities
- General Office Support

WHAT WE OFFER

RESEARCH DEGREES (MASTER/PhD)

Prospective applicants should contact the respective faculty/institute/centre for further details of research projects under each field of specialization.

- Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
- Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
- Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology
- Faculty of Economics and Business
- Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Resource Science and Technology
- Centre for Language Studies
- Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation
- Institute of East Asian Studies
- Institute of Health and Community Medicine

COURSEWORK DEGREES (MASTER)

- Corporate Master in Business Administration (CMBA)
- Master of Science in Human Resource Development (HRD)
- Master of Environmental Management/
- Master of Environmental Science (Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management-Malaysia) (SLUSE-M)
- Master of Advanced Information Technology (MAIT)
- Master of Public Health (MPH)

STATISTICS

Enrolment of Postgraduate Students at UNIMAS (as of July 2009)

Faculty	By Coursework	By Research		Total
	Master	Master	PhD	
Faculty of Economics and Business	120	24	16	160
Faculty of Engineering	0	60	15	75
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences	15	9	5	29
Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts	0	25	5	30
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development	57	30	26	113
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology	39	27	3	69
Faculty of Social Sciences	11	5	7	23
Faculty of Resource Science and Technology	33	174	10	217
Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation	0	12	2	14
Institute of East Asian Studies	0	1	2	3
Institute of Health and Community Medicine	0	6	3	9
Centre for Language Studies	0	4	0	4
TOTAL BY PROGRAMME	**275**	**377**	**94**	
		GRAND TOTAL		**712**

Number of International Students 2009

Country	Programme		Total
	Masters	PhD	
Indonesia	3	7	10
Pakistan	0	2	2
India	1	2	3
Iraq	0	3	3
Bangladesh	5	3	8
Nigeria	2	1	3
Syria	2	0	2
Myanmar	1	1	2
USA	0	1	1
United Kingdom	1	0	1
Total	15	20	35

Total Number of Postgraduate Graduated UNIMAS Convocation 2009

No.	Faculty/Institute	Master	PhD	Total
1.	Fakulti Ekonomi dan Perniagaan	2		2
	Corporate Master in Business Administration (CMBA)	20		20
2.	Fakulti Kejuruteraan	11	5	16
3.	Fakulti Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan	3		3
	Master of Public Health (MPH)	5		5
4.	Fakulti Sains dan Teknologi Sumber	17	1	18
	Master of Environmenttal Science (SLUSE)	11		11
5.	Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia	3	1	4
	Master of Science in Human Resource Development (HRD)	18		18
6.	Fakulti Sains Komputer dan Teknologi Maklumat	2		2
	Master of Advanced Information Technology (MAIT)	1		1
7.	Fakulti Sains Sosial	1		1
	Master of Environment Management (SLUSE)	3		3
8.	Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif	3		3
9.	Institut Kepelbagaian Biologi dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar (IBEC)			
10.	Institut Kesihatan dan Perubatan Komuniti (IHCM)	1	1	2
11.	Institut Pengajian Asia Timur		1	1
	GRAND TOTAL	101	9	110

CONVOCATION 2009

Degree Conferred **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

MAH YAU SENG
Faculty of Engineering
Field of Study:
Water Resources Engineering
Title of Thesis:
Development of a Water Demand Strategy Model on Sustainable Water Supply System for Kuching City

HAIDAR S. ABDULLATIF
Faculty of EngineeringDevelopment
Field of Study:
Environmental Engineering
Title of Thesis:
A Phase Separator With Inclined Parallel Arc Coalescing Plates (IPACP) for Removal of Mechanically Emulsified and Free Oils from Wastewater

HWANG SIAW SAN
Faculty of Resource Science and Technology
Field of Study:
Molecular Biology
Title of Thesis:
Isolation and Characterisation of Genes Involved in the Starch Biosynthesis Pathway of Sago Palm

LEO SING LIM
Faculty of Engineering
Field of Study:
Energy
Title of Thesis:
Design, Fabricate, and Performance Study of an Exhaust Heart-Driven Absorption Air-Conditioning System for Automobile

NGU LOCK HEI
Faculty of Engineering
Field of Study:
Environmental Engineering
Title of Thesis:
Development and Optimization of Circular Phase Separator With Dual Angle Coalescence Plates for Removal of Suspended Solids, Free and Physically Emulsified Oils

ARNOLD PUYOK
Institute of East Asian Studies
Field of Study:
Malaysian and Regional Politics
Title of Thesis:
In Search of Ethnic Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of Parti Bersatu Sabah, 1985-2004

LISA YONG
Faculty of Engineering
Field of Study:
Electronics
Title of Thesis:
Fifth Order Intermodulation Distortion of a Semiconductor Laser

DZULKIFLEE ABDULLAH
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
Field of Study:
Educational Management
Title of Thesis:
Teachers' Commitment : A Study of Primary School Teachers in Sarawak

WANG SEOK MUI
Institute of Health and Community Medicine
Field of Study:
Medical Biotechnology
Title of Thesis:
Gene Expression in Dengue Virus Infection

CONVOCATION 2009

Degree Conferred **MASTER**

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Master of Science: Economics

1. BRENDA JEE HUI SIANG
2. PATRICIA OH SWEE LING

Corporate Master in Business Administration

3. DORREN YEE CHIN HUA
4. HARTYNI BTE MASTOR
5. INTAN LILY RAFIDAH BINTI SAIDON
6. ISA BIN HAMZAH
7. ISHAK BIN MUSA
8. JONATHAN BARATH A/L GOVINDASAMY
9. JONG THAI LOI
10. KEDANI ANAK GANIE
11. LEE EK EE
12. LIM CHING KUI
13. NORHAYATI BINTI TAHIR
14. SIA PIK HUNG
15. SITI RAHAYU BINTI BAKHTIAR
16. SITI ZAINIB BINTI SULONG
17. TAN LAY PHIN
18. TIANG MING ZEARL
19. TIONG UNG YEW
20. TITIANA BINTI NONIAZNI
21. ZAIDI BIN ALWUI
22. ZAKIAH BINTI SULAIMAN

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

Master of Engineering: Electronic Engineering

23. CHONG SIEW WEI

Master of Engineering: Electronics

24. CHAI CHOUNG JUNG
25. JANE CHAI HAI SING
26. LAI KOON CHUN
27. MUZALINA BINTI ZAKARIA
28. TING KUNG CHUANG

Master of Engineering: Mechanical

29. CHARLIE SIA CHIN VOON
30. CHONG KOK HING

Master of Engineering: Enery and Environment

31. NORAZIAH BINTI ABDUL WAHAB

Master of Engineering: Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems

32. ADRIANA LAI MOOK KIM

Master of Engineering: Civil (Project Management)

33. ANDY SIONG TECK KWONG

FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Master of Science: Molecular Biotechnology

34. SUNITA SARA GILL SHAMSUL

Master of Science: Cancer Molecular Biology

35. BOON SIAW SHI

Master of Science: Nursing

36. LEE NA

Master of Public Health

37. A.L LIZA BINTI ABD LATIP
38. JEFFERY ANAK STEPHEN
39. NOOR HAFIZAN BINTI MAT SALLEH
40. NUR FATIHAH OH ABDULLAH
41. SITI KHADIJAH BINTI AHMAD TAJUDDIN

FACULTY OF APPLIED AND CREATIVE ARTS

Master of Art: Fine Art

42. NG SOON MANG
43. OSAKUE EMMANUAEL EHIMEN

Master of Art: Etnomusicology

44. RAJA ISKANDAR BIN RAJA HALID

FACULTY OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Master of Science: Information Technology

45. CHIU PO CHAN
46. TAN PING PING

Master of Advanced Information Technology

47. SINARWATI BINTI MOHAMAD SUHAILI

FACULTY OF COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Master of Science: Minda dan Psikologi Manusia

48. ABANG ISHAR ABANG YAMAN

Master of Science: Cognitive Science

49. ABDUL RAHIM BIN ROSLIE
50. TAN SZE CHA

Master of Science: Human Resource Development

51. AMBROSE CHENG LOI HEE
52. BELINDA ANAK MICHAEL BUANG
53. BUNCUL @BUNCHOL AK LASAM
54. DAYANGKU ZYZY CEMYLYA BINTI AWANG RAHMAT
55. FARIDAH BINTI SULONG
56. FIONA FAN
57. FLORENCE CHIAM TIEN TIEN
58. HAZLAWATI BINTI ALI BABA
59. KAMURUDIN BIN AHMED JUNAIDI
60. LAW KIM FONG
61. LUCY LOH CHING SIENG
62. LYDIA PAYA ANAK RINYUD
63. NOR AZLINA BINTI WAHAP
64. NORHAYATI BINTI ABDUL RAHMAN
65. SHARIFAH NORSYAMSYINA BINTI WAN MAHLI
66. SUFFIAN BIN JALET
67. VALENTINA EDWIN
68. YONG CHEE KIENG

FACULTY OF RESOURCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Master of Science: Kimia Hasilan Semulajadi

69. DIANA KERTINI BINTI MONIR
70. HAZALINAWATI BINTI ZAILANI

Master of Science: Quantitative and Molecular Ecology

71. SITI NURLYDIA SAZALI@PIKSIN

Master of Science: Medical Biotechnology

72. WILLIAM NGU TOH LEONG

Master of Science: Advanced Materials

73. TAY CHEN LIM

Master of Science: Wood Pysics

74. YAHYA BIN SEDIK

Master of Science: Wood Chemistry

75. FAIEZAH BINTI ABDULLAH

Master of Science: Biotechnology

76. AZILA BINTI ADNAN

Master of Science: Inorganic Chemistry

77. IIRENE FOO PING PING

Master of Science: Organic Chemistry

78. INORASHIKIN IRDAWATY BINTI ABDUL RAHMAN

Master of Science: Environmental Chemistry

79. BEBE NORLITA BINTI MOHAMED

Master of Science: Quantitative Statistics and Molecular Genetics

80. JAYARAJ A/L VIJARA KUMARAN

Master of Science: Plant Pathology

81. NORHAYATI BINTI AHMED SAJALI

Master of Science: Molecular Ecology and Evolution

82. NOOR HALIZA BINTI HASAN

Master of Science: Aquatic Science

83. HUNG TZE MAU

Master of Science: Organometallic Chemistry

84. FOO SIONG WAN

Master of Science: Molecular Biology

85. NUR HAFIZAH BT AZIZAN

Master of Environmental Science (Land Use and Water Resource Management)

86. ANN ANNI BASIK
87. DURIE ANAK AUSTINE TINGGIE
88. ELLY LAWAI ANAK NGALAI
89. JOSHUA ONIYEYE ANAK GRAMAN
90. JULYUS MELVIN
91. KUEH HSIAO CHIN
92. KONG WAI LING
93. LINGGAM ANAK LIBU
94. MUYANG ANAK JAMI
95. RAHMAH BINTI BIAK
96. SIM SIAW FEN

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Master of Social Science

97. CHAI SHIN YI

Master of Environmental Management (Development Planning)

98. ABANG JUNAIDI BIN ABANG GOM
99. LADE ANAK ABO
100. SENI ANAK GAIT

INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE

Master of Science: Medical Biotechnology

101. NORKASINAH BINTI RAMJI

IN THE NEWS

newspaper clippings published

HOME THE BORNEO POST Tuesday, January 13, 2009 9

Plant to produce biofuel from sago

By Lee Ya Yun

KOTA SAMARAHAN: A plant will be constructed at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) here to produce biofuel from sago.

The pilot project is developed under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between Unimas and AARGYP SCIENTIFIC Sdn Bhd (AGS) yesterday.

The cost of construction will be fully funded by the Techno-Fund, a research grant awarded by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti) to AGS in August 2007.

The total amount involved will be RM11.6 million and the plant is projected to be fully operational by the end of this year.

The signing of the MOA was an achievement accumulated over several years of research in utilisation of sago starch, sago effluent and biomass by a research team led by Prof Dr Kopli Bujang of Unimas and Prof Emeritus Dr Ayaaki Ishizaki of New Century Fermentation Research (Necfer).

According to Unimas vice-chancellor Prof Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid, sago palm is found in abundance here while sago processing uses a lot of water for starch extraction.

He said in the absence of proper wastewater treatment, this flows freely and thus pollutes nearby rivers and waterways.

"Our researchers have managed to utilise the solid sago fibres, locally called 'hampas', from the sago wastewater. This will minimise the effects of environmental pollution from the sago factories," he said.

> Our researchers have managed to utilise the solid sago fibres, locally called 'hampas', from the sago wastewater. This will minimise the effects of environmental pollution from the sago factories.
>
> Prof Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid, Unimas vice-chancellor

He added that in 2006, the biofuel industry was valued at US$20.5 billion globally, with the production for 2005 at about 20 million tonnes.

The mainstream of the biofuel industries is ethanol at 17 million tones produced by Brazil at 8.2 million tones and the US, 7.2 million tones.

Kopli said they would focus on converting sago wastes into biofuel as this would not interfere with food chain and would be able to reduce the pollution impact from local sago industries to the environment.

"At the moment, sago wastes have been flowing directly to the rivers. If you tell people sago waste can be turned into biofuel, nobody would want to throw the waste away. In fact, we need to buy from them now," he said.

He said the project was aimed at producing E18 or ethanol as an additive — at 18 per cent — to fossil fuel for automobiles.

E18 has been adapted in future plans by the US, most of Europe, Japan, Singapore, Philippines and Thailand.

According to him, adapting E18 or any biofuel is a trend now as it means depending less on fossil fuel which is fast diminishing.

"We hope from the project, we would be able to look for a joint venture with national petroleum industry. We are not a threat to any petroleum company," he pointed out.

He explained the biofuel production from the pilot plant was mainly for research and that they had yet to have planning for commercial usage.

Khairuddin signed on behalf of Unimas while AGS was represented by its CEO Goh Yau Ping.

The signing was witnessed by general manager of New Century Fermentation Research (Necfer) of Kurume, Japan, Dr Cirilo Nolasco-Hipolito.

Techno-Fund is a pre-commercialisation grant which undertakes innovation to develop and commercialise new, cutting edge and breakthrough technologies.

It aims to stimulate the growth and successful innovation, together with enhancing global competitiveness and Research and Development (R&D) among Malaysia's medium- large

14 FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2006 · Borneo Post ·

MoU promises a bright future for sago

KUCHING: Unimas signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with New Century Fermentation Research Co Ltd (NECFER) of Fukuoka Japan to form an industrial partnership in research on sago starch fermentation for large-scale production of ethanol and lactic acid.

One of the most promising developments in the future from the cooperation is the possibility of establishing the first industrial-scale starch fermentation plant in Sarawak by NECFER.

Unimas vice-chancellor Prof Dr Abdul Rashid Abdullah and NECFER chairman Prof Emeritus Ayaaki Ishizaki were the signatories.

In this venture, both institutions will cooperate and collaborate in the establishment of the fermentation parameters and structural set-up.

NECFER is interested to cooperate with Unimas through the sharing of facilities in the Biochemistry Lab together with equipment supplied or transferred to Unimas.

For more than 10 years, Associate Prof Dr Kopli Bujang from the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology (FRST) and coordinator of the Biochemistry Lab has established long-term research cooperation with the Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, Kyushu University, Japan.

This cooperation was based on mutual research in the general area of sago starch fermentation, specifically in production of ethanol and lactic acid.

Explicit details in the fermentation processes for production of ethanol and lactic acid achieved in the Biochemistry Lab in Unimas and the Department of Food Science and Technology in Kyushu University were established through this earlier cooperation.

The data and results were perfected into commercially viable venture by Prof Ishizaki and his associates at the Fukuoka Bioincubation Centre at Kurume, Kyushu.

These researches were financed by the Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS), New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (NEDO, Japan) and Unimas fundamental research grants.

The grants contribute greatly to the development of research infrastructure and meeting with collaborators in Japan, Thailand and Indonesia.

Over the years, the Biochemistry Lab received several reciprocal visits from professors and research students from Kyushu University to stay for a period of one or two weeks on each occasion.

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Prof. Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid (2nd right), exchanging documents with Goh Yau Ping (2nd left) after signing of the MoU witnessed by Dr Cirilo Nolaso Hipolito (left), Prof. Dr Peter Songan (right) and Prof. Dr Kopli Bujang. PHOTO: RAMIDI SUBARI

Sago can be turned into fuel: UNIMAS

By Wilfred Pilo & Anasathia Jenis

KUCHING: Sago biomass either in form of starch or waste can be turned into ethanol for fuel through a process, according to UNIMAS Vice chancellor, Professor Dr Khairuddin Ab. Hamid.

He revealed this in his speech before he signed a Memorandum of Agreement on behalf of University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) with AARGYP Scientific Sdn Bhd (AGS) yesterday.

Dr Khairuddin said the fermentation process has 99.3% recovery, producing over 1000 litres of ethanol from about 1 ton of sugar equivalent. The focus is not so much on using sago starch, but more on utilisation of sago waste which will help reduce the pollution of the environment by local sago industries.

He added that sago solids can be economically treated using enzymes into fermentable sugars and consequently into ethanol. Sago effluent, the liquid by-product from the separation of fibers from sago wastewater has been modified, studies and utilized in Unimas for cultures of the alga Spirulina as food supplement, with possible production of biodiesel using selected petro-algae.

Dr Khairuddin said although some highly technical components will have to be purchased from suppliers abroad, the basic structures and components of the pilot plant would be constructed using the skills of local engineers and contractors, as recognised and selected by AGS.

He said a vacant plot has been identified in UNIMAS for the pilot plant, and construction will commence soon. The pilot-plant would come complete with down-stream processing unit and water treatment facilities is projected to be fully operational by the end of this year.

The project aims to produce ethanol as an additive at 18% or E18 to fossil fuel for automobiles, which has been adapted in the future plans by the US, most of the European, Japan and neighbouring countries such as Singapore, Philippines and Thailand.

As for AARGYP Scientific Sdn Bhd (AGS), he disclosed it as an industrial partner in the construction of a full-scale pilot plant (1000L or 1 ton/day) for the production of ethanol for fuel from sago biomass. He said that the construction cost would be fully funded through Techno-Fund, a research grant awarded by the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) to AGS in August 2007.

He pointed out that Techno-Fund is a pre-commercialisation grant which undertake innovation to develop and commercialise new, cutting edge and breakthrough technologies and aims to stimulate the growth and successful innovation, together with enhancing global competitiveness and R&D among Malaysia medium and large enterprises.

He disclosed that the signing of the MOA yesterday was an achievement accumulated over several years of research in utilisation of sago starch, sago effluent and biomass by Prof. Dr Kopli Bujang of UNIMAS, and Prof. Emeritus Dr Ayaki Ishizaki of New Century Fermentation Research (NECFER) of Kurume, Japan, a research partner with UNIMAS in the venture.

He added that an MOU was signed earlier on August 4, 2006 between UNIMAS and NECFER to enhance research in the specific field of biofuel from sago.

This project was presented earlier by UNIMAS together with NECFER to the Chief Minister of Sarawak in 2007.

He later signed on behalf of UNIMAS and AGS was represented by the Chief Executive Officer, Goh Yau Ping.

The signing was witnessed by Dr Cirilo Nolascohipolito, the General Manager of New Century Fermentation Research (NECFER) of Kurume, Japan, a research partner with UNIMAS in this venture.

B2 B3

Business

EASTERN TIMES • SATURDAY JULY 4, 2009

World's first sago palm bioethanol from Sarawak

KOTA SAMARAHAN: Malaysia will become the first country in the southeast Asian region to produce bioethanol from sago palm starting early next year.

Prof Dr Kopli Bujang from the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), who led the research on bio-ethanol as an environmentally-friendly alternative source of energy to petroleum, said that sago-based bioethanol was expected to be in the market by February next year.

"The bioethanol plant in Unimas is expected to start operating in December this year," he told reporters after a groundbreaking ceremony of the bioethanol plant by Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Fadillah Yusof here yesterday.

Kopli said that besides being environmentally-friendly, the bioethanol product based on sago, to be named E18, would not require any modification to the engine or carburetor to use it. "E18 is more like an additive to petroleum," he said, adding that the product had already attracted enquiries from several Japanese entrepreneurs. He said that the Unimas bioethanol plant was capable of producing 1,000 litres of the product daily.

Based on previous experiments, he said, some five to seven tonnes of sugar could be produced from 10 to 12 tonnes of sago, which were often collected from sago entrepreneurs in Sarawak.

"The five to seven tonnes of sugar can produce bioethanol that are now sold between US$400 (RM1,410) to US$700 (RM2,467) a tonne at the international market," he said.

Meanwhile, Fadillah said that the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry has agreed to award an RM11.6 million grant from its Techno Fund to the plant. He said after the bioethanol project, Unimas would execute a follow-up project to produce biodiesel from sago wastewater - Bernama

砂大生物研究再次取得突破

硕莪残渣提炼生物乙醇

首间由马来西亚砂拉越大学所设立的生物乙醇提炼厂证目向联邦科学、工艺与革新部副部长法迪拉尤素夫主持动工礼。

图示：砂大副校长凯鲁丁邀请纪念品予副部长法迪拉（左二）一瞥，左一为砂大研究与革新系副主任依得采干，右一为砂大生物乙醇提炼厂研究组手人古比利。

（本报古晋3日讯）马来西亚砂拉越大学的生物研究再次取得突破，通过萃取硕莪残渣的糖份来提炼E18生物乙醇－BIO-ETHANOL。

他透露，目前日本已经有两家公司跟砂大达致协议，购买砂大所提炼出来经过法的原生物乙醇。

他解释说，在日本当地所使用的生物乙醇之过滤清洁度必须高达97至99巴仙，但是由于技术上的问题，砂大的乙醇只能达到95巴仙。

他重申，使用硕莪残渣来提炼成乙醇，不但是对环境亲和的做法，更重要的是它避免了粮食危机与生物乙醇提炼所造成的冲突与争议性。毕竟当全球都在关注粮食危机的情况下，如果政府还使用粮食来提炼生物燃油或乙醇将话，

SABTU - 4 JULAI 2009 - 11 REJAB 1430H — SARAWAK RM1.00/ BRUNEI DARUSSALAM B$1.00

UNIMAS bangun Bioetanol

Loji pertama di Asia Tenggara keluarkan biodiesel dari sisa sagu

KOTA SAMARAHAN, Jumaat — Loji Bioetanol yang menghuskan kepada penghasilan biofuel dari kanji dan sisa hampas sagu diwujudkan di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

Dengan anggaran kos pembinaan RM11.6 juta di bawah dana Techno Fund dari Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi (MOSTI), loji merupakan yang pertama seumpamanya di Asia Tenggara ini, dijangka mengeluarkan hasil pada Februari depan.

Timbalan Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi Malaysia Haji Fadillah Yusof berkata, pembinaan loji ini adalah lanjutan daripada kejayaan UNIMAS dalam penyelidikan Bioetanol menghasilkan bahan api dari hampas sagu pada peringkat makmal.

"Kita menjangkakan loji ini akan mula mengeluarkan hasil selewat-lewatnya Februari depan," katanya.

Fadillah berkata, beliau juga inginkan UNIMAS menterjemahkan kejayaan ini kepada skala kecil untuk membantu menjana tenaga menyempurnakan upacara pecah tanah pembangunan loji Bioetanol di tapaknya Kampus Barat, UNIMAS hari ini.

Jepun merupakan negara pertama membuat tempahan untuk mendapatkan bekalan bahan api itu dari UNIMAS.

Loji ini memiliki kepupasan menghasilkan 1,000 liter bio-fuel sehari apabila ia beroperasi sepenuhnya mula Februari nanti.

Hadir pada majlis itu ialah Naib Canselor UNIMAS, Profesor Dr Khairuddin Abdul Hamid.

Loji ini akan menghasilkan bioetonol E18 (18 peratus campuran petrol) untuk kegunaan tempatan dan 80 peratus bioetanol untuk eksport.

Projek ini adalah usahasama UNIMAS dengan penyelidik asing, AGS Sdn Bhd. dan New Century Fermentation Research (NECFER).

Memorandum persefahaman untuk tujuan kajian itu ditandatangani oleh pihak terbabit pada 2006.

Penyelidikan ke atas kanji dan sisa hampas sagu untuk menghasilkan bio-diesel tersebut dijalankan pada 2007

RASMI ... Haji Fadillah Yusof menyempurnakan upacara pecah tanah pembangunan loji Bioetanol di tapak Kampus Kota Samarahan, semalam.

Pilot bio-ethanol plant to be built at UNIMAS

HARUN JAU

KOTA SAMARAHAN: A pilot plant for the production of bio-ethanol from sago will be built at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) in Kota Samarahan here.

The earth-breaking ceremony for the RM11.6 million project, the first of its kind in Malaysia and in the region, was performed by Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovations, Haji Fadillah Yusof, yesterday.

Developed by AGS Sdn Bhd, the project is expected to be completed by the end of this year and will commence production in January or the latest by February next year.

The pilot-plant is designed and developed as a turn-key project, complete with facilities for hydrolysis of starch and cellulose into sugars, fermentation process and downstream processing for distillation and dehydration of the ethanol produced. Water generated from the distillation stage can be recycled for use in starch hydrolysis.

The plant was designed to generate a total of 1,000 litres of ethanol per day from about 1,300kgs of sago starch by adapting the Iotzaki Process.

Apart from bioethanol, the pilot plant can be used to produce lactic acid from sago starch, which is an expensive commodity for the pharmaceutical industry.

Fadillah said MOSTI felt safe to award the grant for the project as the process to produce bioethanol from the pilot plant will focus on sago solid wastes and not totally on sago starch.

He said follow-up projects after this would also include the use of sago effluent for cultivation of petro-algae for production of biodiesel, which will be fed with the carbon dioxide gas released from the pilot-plant for growth enhancement.

FADILLAH (left) performing the earth-breaking ceremony for the pilot bio-ethanol plant at UNIMAS yesterday. Looking on are Prof Dr Khairuddin (2nd right) and Prof Dr Kopli.

Proud to groom a number of the undergraduates to become postgraduates

By Dr. Jane Labadin
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, UNIMAS

The Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology believes that the best candidates for her postgraduate programs are her own undergraduates. For two cycles, the faculty gave career talk to the cream of the would-be-graduates hinting that one of the best thing to do after getting a first degree is to pursue for a higher one. From the two cycles, the faculty is proud to groom a number of undergraduates to become her postgraduates.

This year we have continued the tradition to give this talk to our undergraduates who will be graduating this coming August. Some 68 students turned-up. The event started with an opening talk by the Dean of the faculty, Professor Dr Narayanan Kulathuramaiyer. The Dean informed the students of the faculty's direction, i.e. a research faculty in a comprehensive university. To achieve this, we need human capital to get this moving and among the best

candidates would be the audience. The message is that the students should have an open mind and welcome the option of continuing their studies and that the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology in UNIMAS is the faculty of choice.

Next, Deputy Dean (Research & Postgraduate) presented the faculty's research niche and the on-going research activities in the faculty. In addition, postgraduate programs in the faculty were highlighted and the procedure to apply and the list of postgraduate scholarships available.

The students were directed to the website of the Center of Graduate Studies for further details regarding postgraduate in general. We also invited a postgraduate student, Loh Chee Wyai, to give a talk regarding postgraduate life in the faculty and the reason why he came back to the faculty after having graduated a first degree, and securing a job in the west Malaysia. The main reason he told everyone is that because of the people in the faculty. The lecturers are committed and dedicated in ensuring that their students get the best education from the faculty. He said he cannot find that anywhere else. Then, we have the Directors of the center of Excellence (CoERI and CoEIMAST) as well as the Head of Departments (IS, CSE, CSM and CSCT) to individually talk about the research activities in their respective centers and departments.

Professor Dr Narayanan Kulathuramaiyer
Dean of the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, UNIMAS

Loh Chee Wyai
Postgraduate Student

A Postgraduate Degree is for Everyone

By Zorah Abu Kassim
CMBA Course Coordinator
Faculty of Economics and Business

The MBA is a much sought after postgraduate degree. The popularity of the MBA can be attributed to the special features of the program. The MBA in many cases is a general business degree that appeals to professionals from a wide range of diverse backgrounds. The Corporate Master of Business Administration (CMBA) in UNIMAS is synonymous with the MBA.

The Corporate Master in Business Administration (CMBA) is a flexible and modular program with a comprehensive syllabus of advanced learning in economics and business disciplines of finance, management, marketing and accounting. The objective of the CMBA is to provide students with a firm understanding of managerial aspects of business both theoretically and applied. This means, that the CMBA courses provides a strong foundation in the principles and practices of business management as well as the acquiring of new skills ,analytical tools and perspectives which is the basis of sound business decision making. The CMBA at UNIMAS has full accreditation from the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. The program advisors are Professor Ralph Dean Christie, J. Thomas Clarke, Professor of Emerging Markets at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York and Associate professor Kim-shyan Fam of Victoria University, New Zealand.

The uniqueness of the CMBA is that the program caters for both working professionals as well as fresh graduates. Classes are usually held in the weekends to allow students to complete their postgraduate studies while working. The entrance requirement for the program has been raised from last year in terms of students being accepted not only on their academic merit of achieving at least a 2.75 Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in their bachelor's degree but must have a minimum of two years relevant work experience. However, the CMBA class does have students who are fresh graduates with no or minimal working experience but their entrance into the program requires a higher Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.0 for their bachelor's degree.

Not all students in the program have a business related degree. Many of the CMBA students are also from technical disciplines such as engineering and quantity surveying. Such professionals find the CMBA beneficial especially when they move up the organizational hierarchy from entry level positions to managerial/ middle management positions in their companies This is because managerial skills is of primary importance for middle managers need the ability to tap the technical skills of their subordinates as more important than their own technical proficiency.

The program is also ideal for students who desire a career change. An example of this happened among one of the CMBA graduates. A secondary school teacher decided to operate a small business after completion of the program. The CMBA degree can also lead to students being eligible to apply for a doctoral degree in UNIMAS or to other universities worldwide. With students from a diverse range of backgrounds and disciplines, class time is lively, discursive and intellectually stimulating. In fact, many of the CMBA students form close bonds of friendship and collegial relationship with each other. This is essential as many of the courses in the CMBA require cooperation and cohesiveness as a group to approach in-course group assessments effectively as a part of the program requirement. This is concurrent with the establishment of a CMBA Alumni at the faculty level. With the establishment of a CMBA Alumni, closer relationships between current students, previous students and faculty members can be forged for networking as well as for philanthropic purposes.

The structure of the program comprises of core, elective and research components. The core component offers eight compulsory courses while the elective component offers a choice of five courses. Method of delivery in the classroom is varied from a lecture mode interspersed with group discussions, business games and simulations as well as case studies. As such, methods of assessments for courses in the program varies from written examinations, oral presentations, in-course assessments either as a group or individual work as well as written reports .In the final component of the program, students are required to write a Corporate Business Project. The corporate business project is a 5 credit course that is often taken by students at the end of the program. The corporate business project gives the opportunity for students to write on their own organization either as a case study or a research paper. Before the corporate business project was introduced in the CMBA syllabus last year, students were required to write a research paper. The change of syllabus to a Corporate Business Research project is to incorporate professional work experiences so that it can be directly be relational to students work experiences and interests.

Many students find this aspect of the program as the most daunting challenge in completing the program. However, with hard work and dedication with consistent supervision from the teaching staff, many students get through with flying colors. Furthermore, research papers done at CMBA level are publishable and are sometimes, presented at local academic conferences. Positive feedback from both current and previous CMBA students includes the quality of course syllabus, good interaction between the students and lecturers and an enjoyable and conducive learning environment. Feedback from students is welcomed from different sources either from discussions on a one-to-one basis with the CMBA Program Manager, informal/informal dinners or gatherings organized by the faculty or students or postings from the CMBA blog site at http://www.cmbaupdates.blogspot.com. The CMBA blog site provides a portal of communication for CMBA students. Important announcements such as semester schedules of classes and the latest news is constantly being updated at the blog for information to students.
The CMBA is now celebrating its 10th anniversary from its inception in 1999. The CMBA program is proud to say that consistently, over the years, CMBA graduates have formed the highest percentage of the postgraduate community in UNIMAS. For the year 2007, the total number is 246 CMBA graduates. At the postgraduate convocation held in August yearly, CMBA graduates have walked proudly in Dewan UNIMAS to receive their scrolls from the Chancellor.

The future for the program is bright. There are exciting plans in the pipeline for future developments of offering the program abroad to be affiliated with the University of Management & Economics at Battambang, Cambodia and collaborations to work together on student /faculty exchanges with K.J Somaija Institute of Management Studies & Research (SIMSR) in India. However, there is always much room for improvement. One strategy is to incorporate industry internships, better program management for example, a diligent concern for documenting standard operating procedures & practices, innovative teaching and learning methods in order to create a highly supportive postgraduate environment at both faculty and university level.

In conclusion, the CMBA program today has gone a long way from its humble beginnings in 1999. For the year 2009 and onwards, the program can indeed look forward to a more promising future.

UNIMAS SLUSE Program: Is it an avenue for investment?

By Dr. Wong Swee Kiong
Faculty of Social Science, UNIMAS

SLUSE is an abbreviation for Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management. The SLUSE master program in UNIMAS is a taught program. As the SLUSE Master program was initially introduced by the Danish University Consortium on Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management (DUCED-SLUSE), the nature of the course modules offered in UNIMAS, Malaysia, is similar to those in other SLUSE programs in South Africa and Thailand. In fact, UNIMAS is so far the only university in Malaysia that offers SLUSE master program and has close collaboration

with the Danish group in education and field research. The main objective of the program is to enhance opportunities for training, education and joint research towards generating multi-disciplinary knowledge and skills for the practice of sustainable land use and natural resource management. That is the reason why almost all of our SLUSE students who are working full-time either as private consultants, engineers, lawyers, health

inspectors, accountants or senior government officials, etc are willing and able to sacrifice most of their weekends to take up this valuable program. Being one in the frontline of their organizations where they work, most of our students are busy enough to cope with their daily tight schedule especially during weekdays. They could hardly get a weekend to rest and to spend time with their family. These are in fact some of the opportunity costs (the economic term) for them to enroll in the SLUSE program. Nevertheless, a lot of them would rather sacrifice their luxury time to rest or to spend quality time with their family members during weekends to attend SLUSE classes which are conducted on Saturday and Sunday. In fact, we might say that they have no choice. However, in Economics, we always make assumptions that rational people would make rational decision. When facing various alternatives for people to choose, no rational person will make a decision which would make themselves worse off. This shows that our SLUSE students have in fact weighed the costs and benefits before taking up our SLUSE program.

Evidently, the enrolment of our SLUSE students shows that the rewards/ benefits from attending SLUSE program is greater than the high opportunity cost that they have to incur to attend SLUSE master program in UNIMAS.

The story does not just end when the SLUSE students got enrolled for our SLUSE master program. Some taxing hours indeed come when they are trying their best to accomplish their assignments before the due date. One of our students did mention that his blood pressure escalated when he did not have enough sleep besides suffering from the pressure to meet deadline to finish their group assignment. This is another opportunity cost incurred to take up SLUSE master program. Despite these challenges faced by the students, it does not stop them to continue their studies in the SLUSE program. Of course, they have also gained enormously through their enjoyable fieldwork and mixing-around with different backgrounds of course-mates in their learning process. However, the greatest enjoyment and satisfaction for most of our SLUSE students would be during their convocation day when they are able to celebrate and share the happiness together with their family members after being conferred either Master of Environmental Management in Development Planning or Master of Environmental Science in Land Use and Water Resource Management master degree. Isn't it a rewarding investment to enroll in this multi-disciplinary SLUSE program, not only for one's own value-addition but also for his/her satisfaction when he/she is able to share the happy moment together with the loved ones at the end of the day?

By Associate Prof Dr. Hew Cheng Sim
Faculty of Social Science

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) currently has six Ph.D students and two students who are working on their Masters degree by research. Three of our doctoral students are international students. Many of them will soon complete their studies. There are three departments in the faculty – Anthropology and Sociology, Development Studies and Politics and International Relations. In

addition to these, we have research strengths in gender studies, indigenous communities and issues dealing with urbanization and community development. In addition, FSS also offers a Masters degree by coursework (Master of Environmental Management in Development Planning). This programme of study is popular with working adults who are employed in fields related to environmental planning and development. The faculty is also supported by friendly administrative personnel who will assist our postgraduate students to navigate bureaucratic requirements. In short, the faculty welcomes applicants to the various postgraduate degree programmes and endeavour to provide a congenial and intellectual environment for their studies.

Losing Sight of the Direction

By Dr Ting Su Hie
Centre for Language Studies, UNIMAS

Mention postgraduate studies and two common images come to mind. In the sciences, it is the picture of students wearing white lab coats holding pipettes in the hands. In the arts, it is the picture of students reading books and typing in front of their computers. These images make people think of data collection and writing as the essence of postgraduate studies. These are, no doubt, important activities for research postgraduate students. But what is it that holds these activities together until the point when the students submit their theses for examination? It is the research question that they seek to answer. Yet, they often lose sight of it along the way.

In the sciences, postgraduate students are usually included in research projects which have been conceptualised by their supervisors. There may be other research students and research fellows working on other facets of the projects. In the context of a research group where the research direction has been planned, postgraduate students often get down to the labwork or fieldwork rather early in their postgraduate studies. The protocol for data collection is often pre-determined with some adaptations to suit the research. The hard work seems to be the long months of experiments which may or may not yield results.

In such a context, it is easy for science postgraduate students to forget that their life as a Masters or Ph.D student is not just about experiments, but also an intellectual pursuit. As a result, they do not understand why they are doing what they are doing. They do not understand how their research contributes to knowledge, however small the ripple in the ocean may be. When things go wrong in the data collection and analysis, they go to their supervisors for trouble-shooting because they lack the knowledge to think about their research.

To save time, some supervisors spoon-feed them with the answers so that their students can get on with the data collection. Other supervisors take time to question the students to make them think about the research and ask them to read journal papers. While it may clear to educators that the latter are doing their job to train their postgraduate students into "a thinking researcher", the students themselves may see their supervisors as not having adequate knowledge and possibly wasting their time … until they graduate and emerge as researchers or academics some years in the future.

In the arts, due to research often not being funded by grants, postgraduate students are encouraged to propose their own research. The process of identifying a viable research question usually takes at least six to nine months of intensive reading of the related literature, if not longer. At the same time, they draft a research proposal to help them conceptualise the research: what is it they seek to find out, what have others found out, and how to go about getting the answer to the research question.

Since postgraduate students in the arts are often "not allowed" to embark on data collection until they have acquired sufficient knowledge of the research area, some find themselves reading, reading, reading … and drafting. There is such an information overload that they lose sight of the focus of their research. Instead of narrowing their focus, as good research does, their scope expands. Their literature review chapter develops into an encyclopedia of assorted pieces of information on the topic instead of getting them closer to the gap in existing knowledge on the research problem. Supervisors find themselves reassuring their postgraduate students that the confusion is normal, and the pieces of the jigsaw would fall in place when they write up their results later. The students wonder if they would ever get there.

Other arts postgraduate students throw caution to the wind as to the reading. They are consumed by the methodology of the study: what sample size, which population, how many questionnaire items and so on. They know what data to collect and how to analyse them, or so they think. They may rationalise their research design, instruments for data collection and procedures based on their layman understanding of the field. What they fail to see is "rubbish in, rubbish out". Since the protocol in arts research is often not standard, students may end up with data of little value if the experiments, questionnaire or interviews are not properly planned and conducted. The data may not even contain answers to the research question!

In this bewildering journey, this is what I tell my students: Write the research question on a huge piece of paper and paste it in front of your study table. That's your compass!

Postgraduate activities at Centre for Language Studies

There was much interest from potential students in pursuing postgraduate studies in the Centre for Language Studies, as there have been 17 enquiries since the beginning of the year. Five eventually submitted an application: 3 Masters and 2 Ph.D. Out of the five, only one was immediately accepted as a M.A. (Applied Linguistics) candidate, due to start in July 2009. The others were asked to submit a revised research proposal, and one did. At the moment there are three full-time Masters students and they are all former TESL graduates of UNIMAS. Their research lies in the areas of language testing, code-switching and academic listening. Their publications include:

Ch'ng, L. C., & Rethinasamy, S. (2009, June 11-13). Assessment practices of secondary school English language teachers. Proceedings of 18th MELTA International Conference, Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

Then, D. C. O., & Ting, S. H. (2009). Preliminary study of teacher code-switching in secondary school English and Science classrooms. Manuscript submitted for publication.

RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AT THE FACULTY OF RESOURCE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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Finding the Elusive Research Question: A Postgraduate Dilemma

"What is your research question?" is a common inquiry on any postgraduate student who is about to begin his/her scholarly pursuit. Even for candidates who are undertaking coursework graduate studies, such scrutiny is still valid and evident in their mini-projects. Very often, however, the query on research question represents the most feared subject a student has to face. Why is this so? This essay addresses the reasons on why most graduate students today lack the competence in developing research questions. The latter section of this article includes a brief description of a methodical structure on generating research questions.

In the broadest sense of the definition, a research question is the methodological starting point of scholarly research in any academic discipline or field of research. In simpler terms, it is a statement that indicates what the researcher (or postgraduate student) wants to know first and foremost in the scholarly sense.

Students in the hard science disciplines are often offered an array of tentative research titles and associated details at the beginning of their studies. This is due to the traditional nature of training in the natural and physical sciences where supervisors detached sub-sections of their main research topic to be distributed under the care of their students. As such, in many cases, identification of the research question is often provided if not directly implied. The students are often required to quickly comprehend the research question and then to begin the experimental process. In this form of relationship between supervisor and student, the student functions largely as research worker rather than a co-thinker of the research. With the thinking part of the study sidelined, it is no wonder that the student lack the competence in generating research question. The timely culmination of such practice in universities leads to a mindset among students that scholarly research is more of accomplishing set tasks rather than a thinking process.

Supervisors who encourage students to come up with their own research titles and questions are often viewed as incompetent or unqualified, whereas those who provide substantial details of the prospective projects are deemed as capable and are true experts. While such flawed mentality is largely rejected by the academic community, it is widely conformed to.

In the Arts and Humanities, such mindset is not so dissimilar although the character of postgraduate training varies somewhat from the hard sciences. Here, students are to identify prospective supervisors and then to submit research proposals relevant to the fields of interest of the chosen supervisors. This approach is ideal in providing real training in research due to the independent nature of research study initiation. However, in many cases, the lack of fundamental knowledge in the field forces students to write bad proposals that do not contain true research questions. To get around this, a majority of proposals repeats studies in the local context from published findings that have already been proven elsewhere by others. Sometimes this mistake is also allowed by inexperienced supervisors who ignore the importance of originality in research work. This situation is not only limited to the soft sciences, and is also rampant in the hard science disciplines. Repeating research without rational justification reflects the symptoms of the "Me Too" Syndrome – an explicit demonstration of blind complacency among students and supervisors.

A common misconception among candidates applying for postgraduate avenues in both the hard and soft sciences is the fact that research questions are linked to directly solving practical problems. This arises when popular public perception of research in university is flawed, and expectation of research outputs is wrongly construed as providing innovative solutions to existing practical problems. While this perception may fit the scope of R&D divisions of industry, it is not the main agenda of university.

Research in university should first and foremost embody the scrutiny and generation of knowledge (ideally of fundamental knowledge). Without understand this, students will persistently defy the true nature of research endeavour in university and ignore the need to have genuine research questions at the start of their postgraduate studies.

If coming up with research question is elusive and difficult, what is the guideline for a postgraduate student in order that his/her research pursuit in university is in line with conventional requirement? The statements that follow might provided a methodical structure in generating a research question.

- Identify a topic which is of mutual interest between student and supervisor.
- Narrow the scope of the topic so that it is closely related to the focus of the supervisor's research.
- Identify the knowledge gap within the defined scope of study that has not been research before.
- Formulate a clearly defined research question that is possible to be investigated.

A final note to this essay is the assertion that existence of research question in postgraduate studies must remain unchanged in the face of differing public viewpoints on research in university. The strength of academia lies not on how it blends with popular opinions, but on the solidity of its traditional scholarly values. Research questions in postgraduate projects should not be an elusive matter, and must not be treated as a source of mental dilemma among postgraduate students.

Performance of a Dielectric Barrier Discharger Plasma Actuator

By Andrew R.H. Rigit and Lai Koon Chun
Faculty of Engineering, UNIMAS

Dielectric Barrier Discharge (DBD) is a form of gas discharge by inserting dielectric layers into the discharge regimes. It is a non-thermal discharge under atmospheric pressure and can generate low-temperature plasma in the air. DBD has been widely used for industrial applications i.e. surface treatment, tooth cleaning, wastewater treatment and aerodynamic flow control. In this study, the plasma actuator which can generate the surface discharge has been designed and fabricated. The principles in relate to plasma formation process, electrical performances, and the unavoidable material degradation phenomenon were investigated.

The plasma characteristics were analysed by images captured with a high-speed thermal infrared (IR) camera, by studying the operation cycles and the self-organizing of the microdischarges. The plasma on voltage, which measured the minimum required voltages for generating surface discharges and thus electrohydrodynamic (EHD) airflow, was varied with the dielectric thickness. The operation cycles for plasma formation and deformation process were found dissimilar. Besides, the plasma which was in non-thermal-equilibrium stage was investigated. A suggestion was thus made in order to maximize the velocity of the induce EHD flow for aerodynamic applications.

The electrical performances in terms of electrical limit and discharge power were studied. The motivations included investigation on the proper driving voltages for the discharge operation and electrical breakdown. Experimental results showed that the maximum electric field acts proportionally to the total discharge-free surface area on the plasma actuators. Electrode geometries, e.g. total electrodes of an actuator were found to have little effect on the generated discharge power. This discharge power, however, was mainly affected by the driving frequency and voltage as well as the dielectric geometries. For instance, the dielectric permittivity and thickness t. The empirical scaling law of the discharge power, P can be deduced as:

$$P \propto \frac{V^2 f \varepsilon}{t}$$

The degradation of the dielectric was observed after the plasma operation. Effects of the operation period, magnitude of the driving voltage and electrode geometry on the degradation severity were discussed. Overall, the driving voltage to the plasma actuators was found to be the dominant factor and an improved actuator design was suggested to reduce the undesired damages on the plasma actuator surfaces.

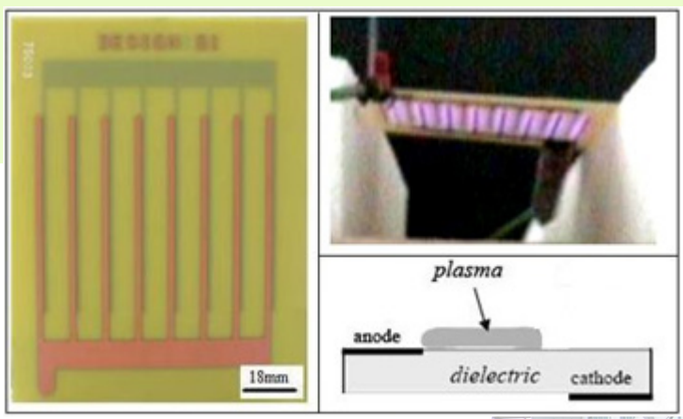

Figure Left:
One of the panels used in this study

Figure Upper Right:
Glow discharge observed while operating a DBD panel

Figure Lower Right:
The plasma can be generated and flowed from anode to cathode

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Dyslexia among Undergraduates in Local Public and Private Universities: A Mixed-Method Study of Prevalence, Academic Performances, Academic Difficulties and Self-Coping Strategies

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(funded under MOSTI e-science No. 06-01-09-SF0024)

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty which gives rise to difficulties in reading, spelling, and writing. In our research conducted on 4,740 students from ten universities in Malaysia, a total of 43 students (22 females and 21 males) have been identified to be at definite risk for dyslexia. The projected prevalence rate for Malaysian public universities is 4.14% and 4.82% in Malaysian private universities, giving an average projected prevalence rate of 4.43% of our undergraduates to be at definite risk.

These students reported difficulties in their studies such as in spelling, slow reading speed, understanding what is read, expressing ideas clearly on writing and organizing essays, skipping lines while reading, copying from board, note-taking, read examination questions multiple times in order to understand them, and insufficient time to complete their examination. Needless to say, at least five have failed their examinations repeatedly due to these difficulties and reported changing courses to one with less reading-demand.

All except one female student did not know that they have a learning difficulty or dyslexia. Some of them thought they were stupid and have been often misunderstood by their parents and teachers as stubborn and lazy or not working hard enough. Two students reported rejection by their peers in the universities and developed feelings of isolation and low self-esteem. These two students also reported non-supportive lecturers who made nasty remarks about their 'weaknesses'. Almost all these students have to sacrifice their social lives and work through many night-to-early morning sessions to struggle in their academic work.

All the affected students develop different coping strategies to cope with their learning difficulties. For some, it is their choice of a course that demands less reading and memorizing. A dictionary becomes their constant companion in their studies. Some students make sure they attend and pay full attention in all their lectures. Tape-recording the lectures is also one of their coping strategies. Many of the students employ visualization of the lecture or text contents and using different colours of highlighters in their reading materials. It is evident that all these coping strategies involve hard work and consume time. With their perseverance in coping, these affected students managed to cope and make it through their universities.

These students who are affected with dyslexia have struggled in their studies and many felt burdened by the academic trappings and may require structured help from their universities. These students have suggested the following examples of support services such as:

- allowed to use a notebook which has automatic spell-check in the examinations,
- allowed to review their marked examination scripts to view their mistakes,
- workshops on dyslexia for lecturers so that they refrain from calling students stupid or use nasty remarks,
- student support centre with trained staffs to be set up in each of their university, extra time in examinations,
- examination papers printed on coloured paper with larger font size to help them in their reading speed,
- assignment topics to be given at the beginning of the semester,
- students are given hard copy hand-outs before class, and
- more hands-on or laboratory work.

In an attempt to ensure equity of opportunities and success to all undergraduate students, there is a compelling need for the Ministry of Higher Education and universities to formulate disability statements or policies for trained staffs, support services and accommodations for this significant minority of students with dyslexia.

TESTIMONIALS

My decision to pursue MAIT at UNIMAS

WONG WEE SIAN
(MAIT Graduate, 2008)

It is a great pleasure for me to write this testimonial in relation to the MAIT Postgraduate Degree offered by FCSIT at UNIMAS. My decision to pursuit MAIT at UNIMAS was one I certainly do not regret. After working for a few years in the IT industry, I had deeply perceived a need to further equip myself in both the theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of Computer Science, and the MAIT program which can be taken on a part-time basis well-suit for my need to have such studying opportunity.

I would attribute my experience in the MAIT program as both inspiring and rewarding. The course structure with variety of topics covered from Wireless Computing to Intelligent System has provided me with a solid foundation and extensive understanding of the emerging computing technologies. It further complements my working experiences in the commercial environment with a more theoretical and academic perspective.

I was very much appreciated of the Research Module in MAIT, which open my experience in performing research works. It cultivated my analytical thinking and skills in the research activity, and I had gained precious experience of having papers published and presenting in international conferences. Such research experience has indeed motivated me to proceed for a further-study plan.

Last but not least, I would like to record my gratitude to all the lecturers and tutors of FCSIT, for their imparting of knowledge and insight throughout the course. A heartily thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tan Chong Eng for his excellent supervision of my research project, and Prof. Dr. Narayanan Kulathuramaiyer for his valuable advice in my path of learning.

Thanksgiving heart now and forever to my university – UNIMAS.

SLUSE-M IS A GOOD POSTGRADUATE COURSE OFFERED BY UNIMAS

BY GERI ANAK GINUNG
SLUSE-M, Cohort 8, UNIMAS
A student of Master of Environmental Management (Development Planning)

Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management (SLUSE – M) is a good Postgraduate course offered by UNIMAS. The joint field work experience with students from foreign universities (JEM 2 – Interdisciplinary Fieldwork and Project Paper) makes it more interesting and a lively course. The wider exposure through JSM 6 – Environmental Management Instruments and System, enables students to learn more on how to write and produce an acceptable and reliable Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of a given topic and area. This particular course, I strongly believe, could also enable SLUSE students to equip themselves to undertake an actual field work in future for EIA report or even to incorporate Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of any given area with standardised, holistic, comprehensive and acceptable research procedures. The participation at the actual presentation session of EIA report held at NREB office enabled me to gain more knowledge on environmental issues. It was an enriching and satisfying experience as the students could learn the more technical part of the actual report. This session was indeed a memorable one and I hope that such arrangement between UNIMAS and NREB would continue to be included as practical session for the SLUSE course.

On a personal note, I really appreciate the high commitment shown by all the SLUSE lecturers, the more experience and less experience alike. Both the SLUSE Coordinators of Environmental Science, Dr. Lim Po Teen and Environmental Management - Development Planning, Dr. Wong Swee Kiong, have done a great job, very dedicated in discharging their responsibilities with much patience and tolerance. The arrangement of the field trip to Roban, Saratok, the preparation of lectures schedules, changes of lecture times and dates, answering and clarifying various enquiries and doubt from students are big task to do. I also appreciate the fact that the coordinators managed to handle various kinds of problems encountered by the students in a very calm and professional manner. I really enjoyed all the lectures throughout the course and record of attendance shows that I attended all the compulsory lectures without a day absent from the class though at times it was a big challenge for me not to fall asleep during the afternoon lectures. I fully acknowledge the great effort and commitment shown by those senior lecturers who guided and supervised us closely especially during the practical field research programmes. I remembered clearly even A.P Dr. Gabriel Tonga Noweg joined us to struggle to walk through the deep peat swamp with sharp torn everywhere in the very thick forest of Sessang village area during the forest inventory exercises. The forest/jungle exploration, the water and soil sampling, socio-economic household surveys were supervised closely by experienced lecturers. Dr. Gabriel even accompanied me voluntarily to do my field investigation especially when I did the water and soil sampling at Terbat area, Serian for my dissertation. In the process of writing my dissertation now, A.P Dr. Spencer Empading Sanggin who is the present Dean of FSS is always helpful, cooperative and giving me the fullest support. He guides and motivates me all the way so that I could complete my dissertation soon despite of his very busy schedule and heavy responsibility as the new Dean. The Ranchan trip remained a sweet memory with the presence of very kind and friendly lecturers like Prof. Dr. Lau Seng, A.P Dr. Gabriel Tonga, A.P Dr. Andrew Alek Tuen, Prof. Dimbab Ngidang, Mr. Stanely Bye and Mr Kelvin Egay John assisted by Mr.Rajuna and Mr.Aziz the laboratory Assistants. I learnt a lot from that trip especially regarding the water and soil sampling exercises. The social gathering at night at Ranchan will always be remembered.

I do not have much complain or grudges throughout the course, but as an ordinary student, there bound to be some unpleasant experiences too. Surely, the little ups and downs I went through are quite normal experience and I take it as a mere learning process. The newly modified JSM 3 'Development and Society' from the former Tropical Forestry and Agricultural System was not well accepted by the students, as only one person could pass the examination. The rest of the students have to sit for the exam for the second time or even possibly for the third attempt for the same paper. Was it a very tough or difficult subject? The examiners and lecturers or even the students would certainly think differently about the whole issue of the subject matter. Most of us as students were quite upset about the whole issues that need to be addressed professionally.

The group work assignments and project paper preparation are always difficult and very challenging task to work out. The breakdown in communication and sometimes even some misunderstanding could delay the progress of the group work assignment. I have to be more patient and tolerant on these matters. At the end of the day, fortunately we still could handle these difficulties successfully and met the due date for submission of the group work assignments. It was very difficult to group members together to sit down and discuss the proposal, material and content of the group work report. At times, my friend and I have to stay awake till 3.30 in the morning just to complete a group project paper at my house so that we would be able to submit on time to the lecturers concerned. Students of SLUSE programme consist of various academic backgrounds. It was rather interesting to share with each other the different opinions and views during the discussion, though little disagreement may came about from time to time. Lastly, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all lecturers of SLUSE Programme of Cohort 8 for their honest and kind assistance rendered to us all. I also wish all SLUSE–M students of Cohort 8 will be successful in all future undertakings. I would like to appeal to all SLUSE–M UNIMAS students from the first Cohort and ever after that to put into practice what we have learnt in the class. I wish, together we preserve, conserve and protect our environment for the present and our future generation.

MY BRUSH WITH CANCER

BY KOH SAY UNG, CMBA

The symptons began in my final semester of my CMBA program. I had trouble sleeping well eventhough I was tired out from a day's work and was ready to hit the pillow at night. The sleepless nights I attributed to the anxiety I was feeling about completing my Masters and the desire to graduate in August 2008. I could tolerate the lack of sleep but what happen next was totally unimaginable to me. I started getting intense pain beginning at my back and spreading like wildfire to my thighs and legs. The pain was gentle at first, at a tolerable level and day by day starting to increase in intensity.

One morning, I woke up with such intense pain that I could hardly get out from bed. My mother who had increasingly become worried about my health suggested that I see a doctor to get a diagnosis in terms of what was wrong with me. I am only twenty-eight and should be at the prime of life rather than like this, pain wrecked and restricted in my movements. I could not bend my back and the pain worsen. I felt like a hundred years old!

At the last resort, after consecutive sleepless nights, I decided to consult the doctor. The doctor, a general practioner at the Sibu General Hospital with a grim face he told me "Young man, I need to do more tests. I suspect you might have bone cancer". I felt my world shatter and the next words that came out of my mouth was "But Doctor, I am doing my CMBA and I want to finish and graduate!". The doctor reassurred me saying that he needed to do more tests and these tests were important to confirm why I was experiencing such pain. In early February of 2008, the hospital scheduled some tests including an MRI and it was found that I had a growth. A biopsy was needed to ascertain whether the growth was maglinant. The MRI tests showed that the growth is fortunately not ! I thanked God for this !

I was hospitalised in Sibu General Hospital with physiotheraphy prescribed. The pain was still nagging me and it was excruciating to move. The physiotheraphy helped but the pain was still there. I had to take painkillers to numb the pain but I was advised by doctors told me to take it easy on the painkillers because taking too many is not good either. After 3 months in Sibu General Hospital, I finally went home and was told to take a good rest. My immediate concern was to finish my coursework of my CMBA..

I had one taught course , Firms, Insitutions and Competition EBB 5332 taught by Dr. Evan Lau. I had done all the assignments but I could not sit for the final exam as I was still in hospital at the time. Dr Evan was symphathetic and was kind enough to allow me to aggregate my marks without having to sit for my final exam. Thank you, Dr. Evan!

However, my pain did not lessen and I went for another medical check-up in the Kuching General Hospital in June of 2008. The specialist doctor attending to me recommended that I undergo an operation. The pain he explained is due to a compressed nerve , a "sciapica" he termed it and due to this it causes an irritation of the nerve roots and that ultimately result in intense pain. The surgery is to remove the tumor and replace it with a metal rod at my spine as the tumor is eating up my bone cells. I became worried not only about the surgery but what if surgery is not sucessful? Do I have to endure this pain the rest of my life? What will my future be like? These are some of the questions that is in my head. I had to still finish writing my research paper for my CMBA and I wondered how I could do that?

As I sat in my hospital bed, I started writing on my topic for my research paper. I had collected the data earlier so I resolve to finish the paper before I undergo my operation. I did not think that I could be able to finish to write after the operation. Every morning I woke up to write bit by bit of my research paper. Sometimes the pain was so bad that I could write only a few lines. Finally, I finished writing my research paper and submitted it to my supervisor, Encik Shahruddin in time before the deadline. The day of the convocation drew near but I was unable to attend because I was in hospital. Well meaning classmates came and brought the convocation robes and I had fun trying the robe on.

Today, I have recovered almost 90% and I can even jog in the evenings. I have to do a once in 3 months medical checkup but otherwise I feel fine. A final word of thanks goes out to all my CMBA classmates, friends and family who helped and encouraged me throughout this ordeal. A BIG THANK YOU also goes out to all of my CMBA lecturers for their understanding and support! Without you all, I would have never made it.

KOH SAY UNG, CMBA (wearing Postgrad. robe) sorrounded by his coursemates

A Tribute to Norrihah

By Dr. Haironi Yusoff
MPH Health Promotion, 2008, UNIMAS

This is the story of my dearest friend, Norrihah Takuan who enrolled into the Masters in Public Health programme with me. We were the pioneer batch as the programme was only introduced in 2004. There were five students initially at the beginning of the programme, four ladies and one gentleman who was from China. In view of the language difficulties, our friend from China had to quit the programme after the first semester as he could not cope with it. So there were only four of us left and we got along really well. Of course, each of us had our own story as to why we joined the programme. However, my friend, Norrihah was special and remained an inspiration to all of us.

She was diagnosed with breast cancer more than five years ago, and was successfully treated as it was detected at an early stage. Of course it was a traumatic event, considering she was still young and had young children herself. However, she pulled through and managed to face life again. When we heard her story and how devastating it was for her at that time, we were all amazed by her enthusiasm and courage to overcome the cancer. She still had the desire to face life and continue her journey to improve herself when all three of us would have put up our hands, surrender and resigned ourselves to staying at home.

Throughout the course, she was the driven one and the three of us were like tugboats that were being pulled by the leader. Being the pioneer batch, there were a lot of challenges that we faced. Sometimes the future seemed blurred and most times we talked about quitting the course if the going got tougher. Not our dear friend! She faced everything head on and undeterred by whatever challenges that came into play. After the completion of our first year of coursework, all of us went separate ways for our field study. Initially, Norrihah and I stayed in Kuching while the other two went back to their respective hometown in Peninsular Malaysia. Again, she took the leadership and took initiatives to make our field study as riveting as possible. We conducted most of our field study together and we brought our cameras so that she can take pictures of me and me of her for our respective reports. We even shared the same study room so that we can compare notes and discuss strategies for our field research. At that time, her husband had moved to Shah Alam to join another university and she stayed in Kuching to look after her eldest two children who were still schooling here. At the end of the year, the whole family moved to Shah Alam. I only saw her every now and then although we still kept in touch. She still commuted to and fro as her initial research was conducted in Kuching. On one of her trips, she came alone and stayed at a nearby hotel. We had a long discussion during the day and I asked her if she would stay with me but she declined, saying that she was more comfortable on her own and did not want to impose. The next morning, when I went to work, I heard news that she fell ill during the night and her husband was coming to pick her up from Kuala Lumpur by plane and they were to fly back the same morning to see her physician in KL. I was extremely anxious about her but was informed that she had fluid in her lungs and will recover. I met her several months later at a conference and was shocked when I saw her. She was deathly pale and had lost a lot of weight. I pulled her aside and asked her what happened. She informed me that her cancer is back. She had undergone chemotherapy and was still in treatment. In fact, the day of the conference was immediately after her treatment and she usually felt very ill from the side effects. However, her face was serene and it was the bravest face I had ever seen, considering what she is going through. Even I felt tired, having flown directly from Kuching to attend the conference. I felt ashamed of myself when I looked at her. She stayed throughout the whole two days of the conference despite whatever ill effects she had from her chemotherapy. She felt positive about her treatment and was willing to do whatever it takes to fight her cancer the second round. I could never imagine myself having this courage and I admire her greatly for that. During the next few months, we were very busy with our final research and field work. We rarely kept in touch with each other and only met during our end of semester assessment meetings. She made it to our gathering in Penang and she looked well and optimistic. She was making good progress in her research and was happy with the way things were going. She was able to work in between her treatment and expressed how lucky she was to have such a supportive family. During our next meeting in Kuching, we received a message that she had been admitted to the hospital due to the complications from her treatment and will not be able to join us. We were worried sick about her especially since she did not reply to my enquiries and messages. I assumed she was either too unwell or did not want us to worry about her. Of course, we could not help but worry. Shortly after, all of us were required to attend a course in Kota Bharu as part of activity in preparation for the thesis writing. She came with her family and did not look like the Norrihah that we knew. She had lost weight and her face was slightly puffy. However, she was in good spirits and when conversing with her, we knew that the old, enthusiastic Norrihah was still there. It was reassuring to know despite her appearance. Her family drove up from Kuala Lumpur and she told us about her interesting sights and experience driving up to Kota Bharu. She tried all sorts of food that she saw on the way and described the pretty places that she saw on the way. It was entertaining and we were infected with her enthusiasm. After the gathering in Kota Bharu, all of us were caught up with writing up the thesis and preparing for the final examinations. That was when I was told that Norrihah has been admitted to the hospital in Kuala Lumpur. A few of our colleagues went to visit her, initially at the hospital and later to her home after she was discharged. On 1st January 2008, she succumbed to the cancer, and passed away amid her loving family. She was buried on 2nd January, which was her birthday, befitting the Quranic verse… from Allah we came and to Allah we shall return. This article is dedicated especially to her. She had been given a death sentence initially but rose from the dead and found the willpower to continue her journey in life and made good to others and her family. She became an inspiration to others to find the strength in themselves to strive and make themselves a better person. When she was told that her cancer was back and that she might not have long to live, she did not let that deter her ambition to complete her masters degree. She did her utmost to do whatever it took and she struggled to the end, when others would have given up a long time ago and surrendered. Thank you, Norrihah for the inspiration and strength that you have given us and it is hoped that your story will give the willpower for other students to excel in their studies.

Penang Gathering:
(From bottom left: A/Prof Dr. Kamaluddin Bakar, Mr Clifton Akoi, Ms Khatijah Yaman, Dr Nor Aryana Hassan, Dr Norrihah Takuan, Dr Hasrina Hassan, Dr Sarinah Shuib)
(Second Row from left: Dr Aliza Latip, Dr Fazilah Mydin, Dr Haironi Yusoff)

Too Much Rain (and Flood) in Sarawak

Salim b Said
Faculty of Engineering
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Floods of 2009

Year 2009 has seen too much rain in Sarawak. It rained continuously day and night for almost the whole month of January. Consequently, there were flooding in many places. Normally, Sarawak receives about 3800 mm of rainfall annually which is much higher than the national average of 2500 mm. And for the month of January, the average rainfall is 600 mm. However, for 5 consecutive days that was from 5th to 12th of January this year, Kuching received 559 mm of rain almost equaling the monthly average. The intensity of rainfall when measured on hourly basis, may not be that high; but because of prolonged durations, the ultimate discharge (measured by the S curve) will be very high, thus causing low-lying areas to be inundated. The case of January flood was made worse due of the presence of spring (king) tides, the highest of which occurred on 13th January and measuring 10.9 m high. There was a different kind of flood in Kuala Lumpur which had created havoc in March this year. Kuala Lumpur receives about 2500 mm of rain per year and for the month of March, the long-term average rainfall is 280 mm. However, on 3rd March this year, 386 mm of rain had fallen in just over 2 hours. Such rainfall of very high intensity coupled with the type of land use in Kuala Lumpur , will produce a very high peak discharge and causing the rivers to overflow. That was the massive flash flood that hit half of Kuala Lumpur due to the overflowing of Sungai Gombak. The Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART) had effectively diverted water from Sungai Ampang and Sungai Kelang during the downpour; thus, sparing some parts of Kuala Lumpur from flooding.

Flood Frequency Analysis

There are several methods of estimating flood occurrences. One of the methods is called "Flood Frequency Analysis" employing the concepts of probability and statistics. The term 'flood frequency' may be quite misleading, but it actually deals with the incidence of peak discharges and not the frequency of flooding (Chow, et al., 1988) Given its size, Sarawak is considered to be sparsely equipped with hydrologic gauging facilities. Although there are about 60 river gauging stations in Sarawak, only 20 of them are free from tidal influence. In such a case, regionalization techniques are normally preferred to estimate design floods (Hoskings and Wallis, 1997) Said, Selaman and Putuhena (2007, 2007b) had employed the regionalization techniques to developed Flood Frequency Regions (FFR) for Sarawak. Only those gauging stations that were not affected by tidal influence (at the upper reaches of the rivers) were used in the study. A map of the proposed FFR is shown in Figure 1. This map has to be read with design graph shown in Figure 2 in order to determine the magnitude and frequency of flood for a given region.

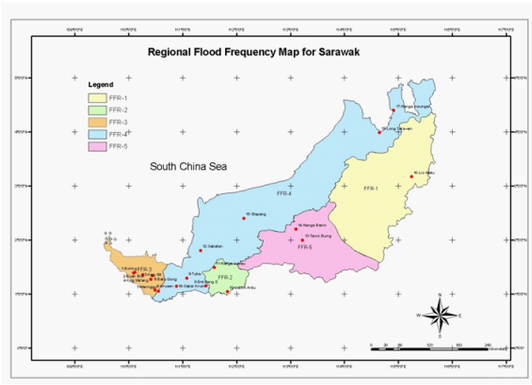

Figure 1:
Regional Flood Frequency Map for Sarawak

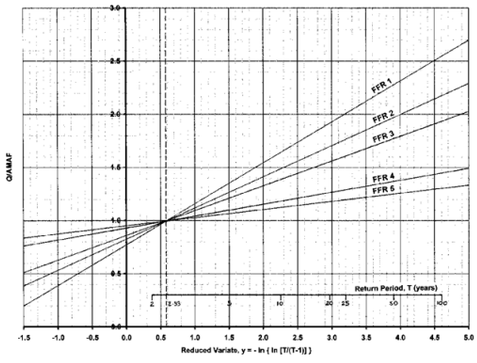

Figure 2:
Dimensionless Regional Flood Frequency Curves for Sarawak

Flood Risk Management

Flooding in Sarawak cannot be avoided since there is too much rain. Flood cannot be fully control and should be accepted as a permanent fact of life. It is a natural phenomenon in terms of probability of occurrence. However, disasters from flooding can be minimized through proper flood risk management (Bedient, et al., 2008) Flood management practices through structural (engineering) and non-structural measures should continue. However, people should be made aware that it is impossible to protect them against the risk of flood. Absolute safety from flooding is quite impossible to achieve; however, flood disaster can be prevented to a certain degree. One way of reducing flood disaster is to install a reliable integrated flood forecasting, warning and response system. A system as such must provide sufficient lead time for the communities to respond. It is important that the State and Federal Governments should seriously consider having such a system to alleviate disasters from flood.

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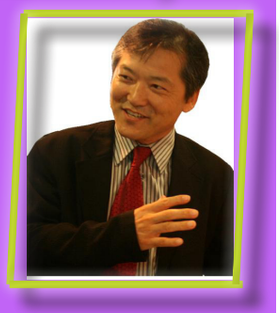
Life is Design Design is Creativity Creativity is Harmony



Who?

Prof.Hong Jung Pyo is a Professor in Chonbuk University, South Korea.

Where?

Currently, he is a Sabbatical Professor in Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts as a Sabbatical Professor from August 2008 until April 2009. He is conducting research in Unimas and contributed his knowledge through seminars and taught a few classes

What?

He came to UNIMAS with three main objectives.

Firstly, is for academic research.
He interested in doing a comparison research on the responses between the consumers of South-East Asia and South Korea.

Secondly, is to teach.
He taught the undergraduate student about design process, creative thinking, design method and design skill that applied in Korea design education. He strongly believed that this will help the student to strengthen the practical ability and skills.

Thirdly, is to setup a design exhibition.
He wants to exhibit his research, theory and research method that related with design and he wants others to have a better understanding about design.

Why?

He wants to share his interest in research, design and design process.

When?

He had given two Design Seminars in the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts. The first one is about 'Emotional Design' on 30 September 2008 and the second talk was on 'Creative Thinking and Design' on 23 Jan 2009.

Design Talk

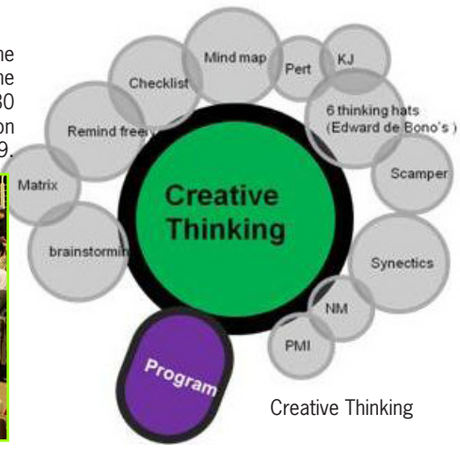
Design Exhibition

How?

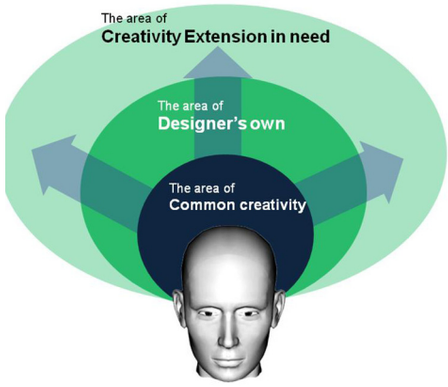
He shared his knowledge and expertise by introducing and explaining to the students and colleagues about research process and perspectives. He wants to expand design and research area and give better understanding both area to others.

Emotion Design

He exhibited his works for 20 days from January 21st with the theme "Life is Design, Design is Creativity and Creativity is Harmony". In his exhibition, there are a few areas that he focuses. Firstly, is "Creative Thinking and Design", which focus on how the designer can come out with creative ideas and how to generate ideas. Secondly, is "Emotional Design". The research touches on the issue related with the sensitivity of consumers and seeks an explanation on design possibilities. Thirdly is "What is Research?", which focus on the research methods, explanation of the research process, and examples of collaboration project that he did previously between university and the industry. From the project, new product are design for LG (washing machine), SAMSUNG (vacuum cleaner), KUMHO (tire), furniture design and silver design.



Creative Thinking

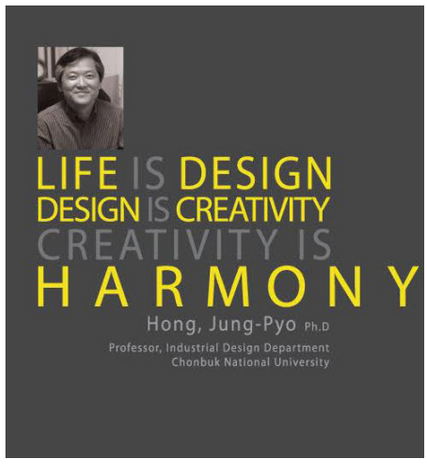


He describes the exhibition in the preface "Life is Design",
"Depending on how I design, the value of my life will be different. Life is a process, just like a design process".

As a conclusion, "our lives are designed and created, and
they should be harmoniously designed".

What he think about life in UNIMAS

"I had a wonderful experienced, met new friends and learned new things."



CGS ACTIVITIES

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak joined others in promoting its graduate programs via MOHEX 2009 at Mumbai India from 20 - 26 May 2009. The entire programme for visits was arranged on the advice of Dr.Vijay Khole, Vice-Chancellor, University of Mumbai. A total of 10 universities were visited in Mumbai. The exhibition was for 2 days and welll received.

The Centre for Graduate Studies had represented UNIMAS to the MIDDLE EAST EDUCATION, TRAINING, EQUIPMENT & SOLUTIONS (MEETES'09) EXHIBITION & SYMPOSIUM in JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA from March 15 to 18 2009. During the event organized by MOHEX, the university's booth received about 350 visitors. Fruitful enough, 11 visitors have applied for enrolment as Masters and PhD students while another 9 visitors applied for the undergraduate programmes.

As a curtain raiser for 2009, the Centre for Graduate Studies has participated in a three days Postgraduate Education Fair 2009 which held at Midvalley Shopping Mall, Kuala Lumpur from January 16 to 18, 2009. At the fair, the centre's booth well received a total number for both local and foreign visitors. Among the feedbacks received from the visitors was for UNIMAS to hold program by coursework be conducted in Kuala Lumpur - based part time and full time courses for CMBA, SLUSE and MAIT programmes.

The Centre for Graduate Studies had participated in a promotional exhibition PostgradAsia Live 2009 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from June 27 to 28, 2009. Many of the visitors expressed their interest to further their studies in Masters and PhD in UNIMAS. The centre's officials have diligently and successfully gave a clear information of the programmes offered by the varsity.



20th Meeting of Malaysian Deans of Graduate Studies (MYDEGS) Council, 9 - 11 January 2009

Coursework Programme Preview, 11 April 2009

Jeddah Roadshow, March 2009

Education and Career Seminar 2009 at Petra Jaya, Kuching

Promoshoots of International Graduate Students

Postgraduate Studies Talk for 3rd Year Students at Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, UNIMAS

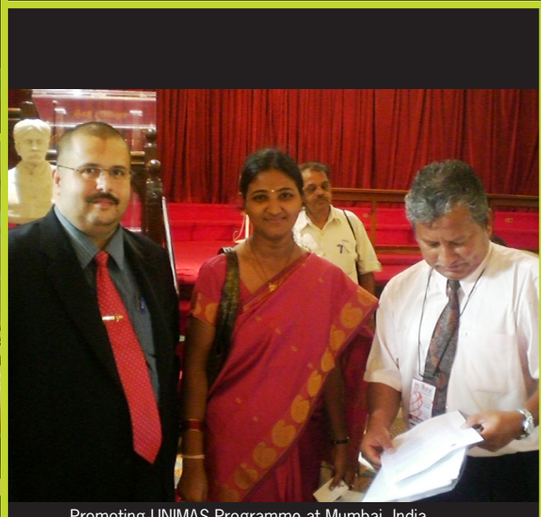
Postgraduate Studies Talk for 3rd Year Students at Faculty of Engineering, UNIMAS

SNAPSHOTS
of activities at the Centre for Graduate Studies

Postgraduate Education Fair 2009, 16 - 18 January 2009 at Midvalley Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur

'Poco-Poco' Dance at MYDEGS Welcoming Dinner

PostgradAsia Live Fair 2009,
27 & 28 June 2009 at KLCC



Promoting UNIMAS Programme at Mumbai, India

Mesyuarat ke-20 Majlis Dekan Pengajian Siswazah IPTA Malaysia 2008
Pada 10 Januari 2009 di UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

UNIMAS was the host to MYDEGS 20th Meeting